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Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty Exit Study

2015/16 – 2016/17

Contents

[Executive Summary 3](#_Toc514333412)

[Introduction 4](#_Toc514333413)

[Cautions 5](#_Toc514333414)

[Review of the Literature 5](#_Toc514333415)

[Reasons for Departure 5](#_Toc514333416)

[Satisfaction 6](#_Toc514333417)

[Work Environment 6](#_Toc514333418)

[Workload and Support 6](#_Toc514333419)

[Compensation 6](#_Toc514333420)

[The Influence of Rank and Seniority 7](#_Toc514333421)

[Gender 7](#_Toc514333422)

[Methods 8](#_Toc514333423)

[Participation Summary 9](#_Toc514333424)

[Response Rate 9](#_Toc514333425)

[Faculty Characteristics 9](#_Toc514333426)

[Findings 11](#_Toc514333427)

[Exiting Faculty are Generally Satisfied 11](#_Toc514333428)

[Satisfaction at the University over Time 12](#_Toc514333429)

[Opinions on Fairness 13](#_Toc514333430)

[Room for Improvement 13](#_Toc514333431)

[Validity of Penn State’s faculty performance evaluation methods 13](#_Toc514333432)

[Salary increases that relate fairly to performance 13](#_Toc514333433)

[Spousal employment opportunities 14](#_Toc514333434)

[Rewards for teaching at the University 14](#_Toc514333435)

[Faculty Work Environment 14](#_Toc514333436)

[University Direction 14](#_Toc514333437)

[Level of Assignments 15](#_Toc514333438)

[Level of Support 15](#_Toc514333439)

[University Salary and Salary Increases 15](#_Toc514333440)

[Opinions on Tenure Expectations 16](#_Toc514333441)

[Race and Ethnicity Issues 16](#_Toc514333442)

[Gender Issues 17](#_Toc514333443)

[Campus Differences 18](#_Toc514333444)

[What Matters Most: Faculty Ratings of Importance 19](#_Toc514333445)

[Priority Matrix 20](#_Toc514333446)

[Employee Benefits and Health Care 22](#_Toc514333447)

[Professional Autonomy 22](#_Toc514333448)

[Not Everything Matters Equally 22](#_Toc514333449)

[Conclusion 23](#_Toc514333450)

[References 25](#_Toc514333451)

[References continued… 26](#_Toc514333452)

[References continued… 27](#_Toc514333453)

[Appendix A: Faculty Exit Interview Officers 2013/14 – 2014/15 28](#_Toc514333454)

[Appendix B: Distribution of ratings for satisfaction 29](#_Toc514333455)

[Appendix C: Distribution of ratings for importance 32](#_Toc514333456)

# Executive Summary

Faculty turnover can have significant costs for a university and in extreme cases, may reflect systemic problems. For these reasons, Penn State regularly collects interview and survey data from departing tenured and tenure-track faculty members. This report summarizes the interview and survey findings for fiscal years 2015/16 and 2016/17, which is referred to as the “current study” throughout this report. Due to the Voluntary Retirement Program (VRP) of 2016/17, an unusually large number of faculty departed Penn State during the current study period. Compared to previous studies, almost twice as many faculty members participated in the survey and almost three times as many participated in the interviews in the current study. Traditionally the *Faculty Exit Study* has incorporated findings from the interviews and survey data into one combined report. However, due to the large volume of exiting faculty members and the additional time needed to analyze the interviews, the quantitative report of survey findings was initially released in January 2018. This document represents the full, combined report, including both the quantitative findings from the survey and the qualitative findings from the interviews. Faculty members’ impressions and experiences are very personal and contextualized, and these findings are based on faculty who elected to participate in the exit survey and/or interview. Consequently, generalizations must be made with extreme caution.

Key findings:

* For the most part, and as in prior years, departing faculty were generally satisfied with their Penn State experiences.
* Faculty on the survey were most satisfied with employee benefits, professional autonomy, and the quality of library facilities. Many faculty in the interviews also positively commented on library services.
* Faculty provided positive feedback on grant and research support services in the interviews and survey, noting that the increased emphasis on these areas has improved Penn State’s competitiveness and status as a national and international research institution. Faculty provided negative feedback, however, on the stress of a heavy workload and the “pressure to do it all.”
* In the interviews and survey, many faculty expressed lower levels of satisfaction with faculty performance evaluation methods, particularly in the tenure process, as well as rewards for teaching. Faculty in the interviews emphasized the need for clear and well-communicated criteria in the promotion and tenure process.
* For the scaled survey items, there were no notable differences in satisfaction between male and female faculty, or between University Park and other Penn State campuses. Relative to previous studies, the gap in satisfaction ratings has decreased between these groups. It is possible that the narrowing of this gap can be attributed to the larger sample size in the current study.
* In the interviews, the faculty who discussed sexism tended to be female. Their comments were mainly related to a negative workplace environment for women. The faculty who commented positively about gender, and diversity in general, tended to be male. Their comments were related to the increasingly diverse population of the Penn State community.
* The findings from the survey and interviews diverged in the emphasis that faculty placed on shared governance. This was one of the least important items in the survey, but in the interviews many faculty expressed a concern about an increasingly “top-down approach to decision making” and the importance of increasing faculty participation in the governance process.
* Some of the faculty who left for more attractive positions elsewhere cited higher salaries, but most of these faculty discussed leaving for positions with more professional opportunities, as well as departments that have stronger reputations within their academic discipline.
* Asian faculty and faculty who were departing due to a tenure denial or negative tenure expectations are underrepresented in the data. These groups should be strongly encouraged to participate in the future.
* Many faculty who participated in the VRP explicitly stated that the offer incentivized them to retire earlier than they would have otherwise. Almost all retiring faculty expressed a desire to maintain a connection to Penn State.

# Introduction

Since 1998, the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs[[1]](#footnote-1) has led an effort to offer every tenured and tenure-track faculty member leaving the University the opportunity to participate in an exit survey and/or an exit interview. This is done in conjunction with deans and chancellors at Penn State.[[2]](#footnote-2) Faculty turnover is an area of critical concern for all universities. While turnover has some positive aspects, such as allowing opportunities for professional growth and bringing fresh ideas and approaches into academic communities, it also has significant costs. “The costs of turnover; such as subsequent recruiting expenses, disruptions of course offerings, discontinuities in departmental and student planning, and loss of graduate student advisors, are borne at the individual, departmental and institutional levels” (Zhou & Volkwein, 2004). Furthermore, in extreme cases, unusual levels of turnover may reflect serious problems at the program, college, or even institutional level. The goal of this study is to better understand the experiences of tenure-track faculty members at Penn State so that the University may respond to faculty concerns.

The 2016/17 year was a unique year for Penn State due to the Voluntary Retirement Program (VRP), where eligible faculty were offered one lump-sum payment of 100% of annual base salary to retire on December 31, 2016 or June 30, 2017. As such, Penn State had a higher number of faculty members departing and participating in the exit survey and/or interview than what is typical. Sixty-one faculty responded to the survey and 84 participated in interviews for the current study, compared to 28 and 29, respectively, in the previous study.[[3]](#footnote-3) This report summarizes the interview and survey responses over the last two fiscal years (2015/16 and 2016/17).

# Cautions

The implementation of the VRP and the larger than typical number of faculty respondents in the current study raise questions about selection bias. Retiring faculty may feel more positive about their Penn State experience than faculty who leave the University before retirement. Consequently, retiring faculty may skew survey and interview results because they rate survey items more favorably than faculty who have left due to tenure denial, being counseled out, a more attractive position elsewhere, or other reasons. The proportion of faculty in this study who indicated retirement as their reason for leaving (55%) is slightly higher than previous years. However, it is possible that even though faculty reported a primary reason *other than* retirement for leaving, their decision to leave was influenced by the VRP and the pay-out incentives the program offered. The impressions and experiences of all exiting faculty members – whether retiring or not – are very personal and contextualized, so generalizations must be made with extreme caution.

The limited ability to differentiate survey and interview results between, for example, retirees and tenure denials has been, and remains, a limiting aspect of this project. This problem is particularly evident in the survey results. Of the 532 survey records for the twenty years in aggregate, 241 faculty members (45%) report leaving for retirement, 173 (33%) for a more attractive position elsewhere, and only 24 (5%) because they were denied tenure or were counseled out. On the other hand, it is reliably known from other studies that about 58% of entrants to the tenure process at Penn State will ultimately receive tenure—so about 42% of the entrants to the tenure track leave, on average, without tenure (Penn State, 2017c). Although pre-tenured faculty make up only a portion of all exiting faculty, these numbers suggest substantial non-response bias in the survey and interview data. Although pre-tenure faculty leave for a variety of reasons unrelated to anticipated tenure outcome, this may also indicate that a number of respondents who indicated leaving for a more attractive position were not anticipating a positive tenure outcome.

# Review of the Literature

The literature on academic work applies a variety of theoretical frameworks to better understand what factors influence faculty careers, including demographic characteristics, resources, job satisfaction, work-life balance, work environment, and compensation. Across these studies, one thing remains consistent – the interplay between these many influences is complex and often difficult to interpret. Following is a brief overview of some of the major work in this area.

## Reasons for Departure

While the literature is not robust in the area of faculty departure, there have been several rigorous explorations of this issue in the past decades. The factors that influence departure are diverse and numerous, but a number of studies attempt to explore their breadth in order to identify the most salient. In 1992, Moore and Gardner surveyed the faculty at Michigan State University and found that the top five reasons for leaving were: availability of research funds, research opportunities, reputation of the department, departmental leadership, and salary. These reasons differed from Schuster and Wheeler’s (1990) findings, which suggested eight key contributors to faculty departure. In order, these were: deteriorating working conditions; compensation; weak labor markets; conflicting expectations; aging, tenured faculty members; shifting values; compressed career ladders; and faculty morale.

## Satisfaction

The research literature suggests that the significance of faculty job satisfaction should not be underestimated (Daly & Dee, 2006; Smart, 1990). Low job satisfaction can imply that a faculty member has not been able to meet institutional expectations and is in the process of disaffiliating from the institution (Moore & Gardner, 1992). There are many factors that contribute to the latent concept of satisfaction, and one could argue that almost every aspect of faculty departure in the following paragraphs contributes directly or indirectly to a faculty member’s feeling of satisfaction. Hagedorn (2000) posited that life events (“triggers”) such as the birth of a child or a change in rank or tenure interact with variables such as academic work; salary; relationships with students, peers, and administrators; and institutional climate and culture, to affect satisfaction. In two separate national studies, Zhou and Volkwein (2004) and Rosser (2004) explored multiple aspects of faculty satisfaction and concluded that it was an important predictor of faculty intention to depart. Caplow and McGee (1958), in their seminal piece on faculty mobility, contended that faculty members are more likely to seek out and respond to outside offers because of dissatisfaction with their present employment situation than they are to be enticed to leave simply by better situations. This finding is similar to those of Toombs and Marlier (1981) and Gartshore, Hibbard, and Stockard (1983).

## Work Environment

Both Matier (1990) and Moore and Gardner (1992) posited that work environment is an important issue for faculty members and a critical dimension in a faculty member’s final decision to leave. Metrics for work environment vary from study to study, but the construct is generally divided into the internal and external environment, where the internal focuses on working conditions as well as intangible and tangible benefits of the job, and the external is related to the labor market, quality of life, and family issues. Aspects of work environment found to be related to departure include workplace stress (Ryan, Healy & Sullivan, 2011), lack of faculty autonomy (Daly & Dee, 2006; Smart, 1990), and lack of communication (Daly & Dee, 2006).

## Workload and Support

A number of aspects of workload, including the human and financial resources to support professional work, are related to faculty departure. Daly and Dee (2006) found that feelings of not having enough time to get everything done, having to work very fast, and excessive workload were negatively correlated with intent to stay. Further, they found that feelings of role conflict, such as feeling conflicted about teaching and research duties, were also negatively related to intention to stay. Rosser (2004) explored faculty perceptions of support for their work and concluded that technical support, administrative support, and support for professional development were important in faculty retention.

## Compensation

While the literature is not consistent in its findings on the relationship between faculty salaries, satisfaction, and departure, a number of studies have found that in addition to working conditions, salary is also important to faculty members (Gill, 1992; Ryan, Healy & Sullivan, 2011; and Zhou & Volkwein, 2004). Daly and Dee (2006) argued that distributive justice, the belief that rewards and salary are equitable, was positively related to intent to stay, but some research suggests that the importance of compensation may vary by faculty rank (Ehrenberg, Kasper, & Rees, 1989).

## The Influence of Rank and Seniority

Seniority and academic rank may mediate the influence of many factors on faculty satisfaction and intention to depart (Hagedorn, 2000; Zhou & Volkwein, 2004). Moore and Gardner (1992) found that the most dissatisfaction over support services was expressed by associate professors. They also found that assistant and associate professors were more interested in leaving than professors and that assistant professors who held administrative positions expressed dissatisfaction with most aspects of their careers. Perhaps most interestingly, Moore and Gardner (1992) reported that satisfaction ebbs and flows numerous times over the span of a faculty career.

Other differences by faculty rank are noteworthy. Ehrenberg et al. (1989) found that higher compensation levels did increase the retention of assistant and associate professors, but had no effect on retaining professors. In a faculty retention study at two public Research I universities, Matier (1990) found that associate professors were less likely than assistant and full professors to accept outside offers. Matier also found that associate and full professors were more receptive to considering outside offers, if approached, particularly during times of salary freezes. This was also true with assistant professors, although to a lesser extent.

## Gender

A literature on the differences between male and female college faculty members has been emerging for several decades. In short, the findings are mixed. Differences due to gender exist, but the similarities are greater than the differences and over-simplifications are risky. This is illustrated by several thorough and rigorous studies, using complex theoretical frameworks and multivariate analytic methods, and nationally representative data. For example, a 2008 analysis found that multiple and diverse characteristics of faculty members (such as discipline, race, gender, and disability status) affected job satisfaction. In general, that analysis suggested that female faculty members were less satisfied with most dimensions of their jobs than were their male peers (Siefert & Umbach, 2008). However, those researchers also emphasized that their results were complex (noting, for example, that women in disciplines where faculty members produce a large number of articles were more satisfied with all of the dimensions of work examined in the study). Another 2008 study examined gender disparities in attrition and turnover intentions for faculty members in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines (Xu, 2008). Women faculty members in these fields were significantly more likely to change positions within academia and their turnover intentions were more highly correlated than those of men with dissatisfaction with research support and perceived advancement opportunities. However, women and men did not differ in their intentions to depart from academia, and both genders were equally committed to their academic careers in STEM fields.

Other studies have been more focused on particular aspects of the faculty experience. A study of 320 faculty members at 10 business schools found that the determinants of faculty perceptions of rewards for research productivity were largely similar across demographic groups and that the differences were mostly related to seniority (tenure status and rank), but that there were some gender-related differences as well (Chen, Gupta, & Hoshower, 2004). In that study, female faculty members placed somewhat greater emphasis than their male colleagues on what the authors termed intrinsic rewards, such as peer recognition and respect, than on extrinsic rewards, such as receiving tenure, promotion, or salary raises. A study on determinants of job satisfaction among faculty members at one private research university suggested that the factors are more similar than different for men and women—but that women’s job satisfaction derived more from their perceptions of relational support, while men’s job satisfaction resulted about equally from perceived relational support and the perceived availability of academic resources (Billmoria, et al., 2006). In a related finding, Moore and Gardner (1992) reported that female faculty members were more dissatisfied than men with work load, assignment mix, support services, and time available to conduct research, and that women, at all ranks, were more likely to be interested in leaving.

In regards to departure, Tamada and Inman (1997) found that male and female faculty members have the same rates of retention. Likewise, Brown and Woodbury (1995) found that tenure-track women separate at the same rate as tenure-track men. In contrast, Honeyman and Summers (1994) reported that women left their faculty positions in disproportionately high numbers in comparison to their male counterparts. At Penn State and a selection of its American Association of Universities peers, women receive tenure at a lower rate than men, but disparities in tenure rates may also be attributed to disciplinary differences (Penn State, 2017b).

Of course, there are potentially many explanations for the differences in career experiences between male and female faculty members. Moore and Gardner (1992) offered one in reporting that female faculty members are more likely to be in a dual career relationship (86% of women compared to 69% of men). And the literature is bringing more attention to issues around the intersection of gender, family responsibilities, and academic careers. Articles in *Academe* on “Do Babies Matter?” (Mason & Goulden, 2002; Mason & Goulden, 2004) and the “Bias Against Caregiving” (Drago et al., 2005) are finding evidence that babies and caregiving do matter and appear to have negative impacts on career progress for younger faculty members. As reported in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (Wilson, 2006), there is also evidence of a possible tenure-rate gap affecting female faculty members in particular, as well as (to a lesser extent) minority faculty members (Dooris & Guidos, 2006).

# Methods

The *Faculty Exit Study* uses two mechanisms of data collection: personal interviews and a survey. For the interviews, each college or tenure-granting unit within the University appoints an individual to serve as that unit’s Exit Interview Officer. Appendix A provides a list of Exit Interview Officers as of May 3, 2018. When alerted by a local Human Resources representative of the upcoming departure of a tenured or tenure-track faculty member, the Exit Interview Officer is responsible for contacting the exiting faculty member to arrange for the interview, conducting the interview, and submitting a written summary of the individual interview—with the exiting faculty member’s permission—both to the appropriate dean or chancellor and to the Office of the Provost. Exiting faculty members may choose whether or not to have their name appended to the report.

Interview responses are read and analyzed by analysts in the Office of Planning and Assessment. A coding scheme reflecting both initial conceptions of key topics, and a more inductive, dynamic development of codes throughout the process, is used to analyze the data.

In addition to the interview, exiting faculty members are invited to complete the confidential online Faculty Exit Survey. The online survey contains 45 items reflecting various facets of the faculty work environment. Respondents are asked to indicate their degree of satisfaction and also the level of importance they place on each item (detailed results for these items are included in Appendices B and C). Each item is rated on a five-point, ordinal scale. The survey also includes a series of multiple choice and open-response questions addressing faculty members’ experiences at Penn State. Completed surveys are submitted to the Office of Planning and Assessment where they are analyzed.

As a valuable feedback mechanism, the survey provides the exiting faculty member with a convenient and anonymous opportunity to express their opinion. The survey also provides a consistent, quantitative data source, which enables cross-group and longitudinal comparisons. Additional information about this process may be found at <https://www.vpfa.psu.edu/faculty-exit-feedback/>.

# Participation Summary

## Response Rate

University Human Resources data indicates that 374 tenured or tenure-track faculty members exited the University during fiscal years 2015/16 and 2016/17. In any given year, some exiting faculty members decline to participate in the survey while agreeing to be interviewed, and vice versa. Also, in a typical year some faculty members cannot be contacted and others simply state that they do not wish to participate in any way. The overall response rate is impossible to determine as a faculty member may participate in either the interview or the survey or both, and participation is confidential. The dataset for this analysis consisted of 84 responses to the Faculty Exit Interview and 61 responses to the Faculty Exit Survey, yielding a 22% response rate for the interview and a 16% response rate for the survey. The response rate for the interview was higher than previous years, and the response rate to the survey was similar to the previous year (in the previous study, the interview had a 16% response rate and the survey had a 15% response rate).

The 142 combined interview and survey responses in 2015/16 and 2016/17, which likely include some individuals who are represented in both modes, include 78 responses (55%) that we could identify as leaving due to retirement, 33 (23%) leaving for a more attractive position elsewhere, 23 (16%) leaving for another or undetermined reason, and 9 (6%) leaving due to a tenure denial. A large number of faculty in the interviews and survey explicitly stated that the VRP expedited their plans to retire in next few years since it was “too good to turn down.” Of the respondents leaving for another reason or an undetermined cause, seven indicated that they relocated for family reasons. Other faculty in this group referenced leaving due to their spouses finding employment elsewhere or leaving due to a negative work environment, with some referencing their colleges’ and deans’ roles in cultivating this climate.

## Faculty Characteristics

The *Faculty Exit Study* is a University-wide initiative. University Park is Penn State’s largest campus and also the administrative hub of the University. Nearly 62% of the entire tenured and tenure-track faculty are located at the University Park campus (Penn State, 2017b). The variation in size among Penn State’s other campuses combined with the variation in response rate among those campuses makes individual campus comparisons impossible. The project analysts were able to identify 49 interview respondents and 33 survey respondents from Penn State’s University Park campus, and 22 interview respondents and 21 survey respondents from Penn State’s other campuses. With respondents at Penn State’s other campuses representing approximately 31% of those with an identifiable campus location in the interviews and 39% in the survey, faculty at Penn State’s other campuses were slightly underrepresented in the interviews but were well-represented in the survey.

Males made up the majority of responses with 45 interview responses and 35 survey responses. Females provided 34 interview and 19 survey responses.[[4]](#footnote-4) When compared to the ratio among Penn State faculty overall, where males make up 67% of the full-time, tenured and tenure-track faculty (Penn State, 2017d), males were underrepresented (57%) among interview respondents. The percentage of respondents who reported gender on the survey was roughly representative of the percentage of male and female full-time, tenured and tenure-track faculty at Penn State.

In terms of racial composition, the survey respondents were relatively representative of White and Black/African American tenured and tenure-track faculty at Penn State, and were under-representative of Asian and Hispanic/Latinex faculty.[[5]](#footnote-5) Asian faculty were the least represented ethnic group in the survey data. Although Asian faculty represented approximately 13% of Penn State faculty in Fall 2016, only two percent of survey respondents identified as Asian. The three percent of Hispanic/Latinex faculty at Penn State were not represented at all in the survey. Table 1 provides a demographic breakdown of the faculty who participated in the survey and interviews, as well as faculty at Penn State overall.

**Table 1. Demographics of full-time, tenured and tenure-track faculty**

| Campus | Penn State Overall | Survey | Interview |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Percent | Count | Percent | Count | Percent |
| University Park | 62% | 33 | 54% | 49 | 58% |
| Other Campuses | 38% | 21 | 34% | 22 | 26% |
| Not provided | NA | 7 | 12% | 13 | 16% |
| Total | 100% | 61 | 100% | 84 | 100% |

| Race/ethnicity | Penn State Overall | Survey |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Percent | Count | Percent |
| White | 70% | 47 | 77% |
| Asian | 13% | 2 | 3% |
| Black or African American | 4% | 2 | 3% |
| Hispanic/Latinex | 3% | 0 | 0% |
| Other | 5% | NA | NA |
| Not provided | 5% | 10 | 16% |
| Total | 100% | 61 | 100% |

| Gender | Penn State Overall | Survey | Interview |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Percent | Count | Percent | Count | Percent |
| Male | 67% | 35 | 57% | 45 | 54% |
| Female | 33% | 19 | 31% | 34 | 40% |
| Not provided | NA | 7 | 11% | 5 | 6% |
| Total | 100% | 61 | 100% | 84 | 100% |

# Findings

## Exiting Faculty are Generally Satisfied

Generally speaking, faculty members leaving Penn State continue to be satisfied with their experience at the University. Of the 55 faculty members who explicitly expressed their level of satisfaction at Penn State,[[6]](#footnote-6) 49 respondents stated that they were generally satisfied. Only six respondents stated that their level of satisfaction had decreased toward the end of their time at Penn State.

The survey responses reflect similarly positive opinions. Among the 45 items rated for satisfaction in the survey, there were 26 items for which the most frequent response was the highest or next highest rating. The table in Appendix B provides the distribution of satisfaction ratings for each of the 45 rated items on the survey questionnaire.

There were 20 items for which more than one-half of the respondents indicated the highest or next to highest rating for satisfaction. Based on this measure, the items with which the faculty appears to be most satisfied are:

* Employee benefits (81%);
* Professional autonomy (courses, research projects, service, etc.) (79%);
* Quality of library facilities (77%);
* Course teaching assignments (71%);
* Professional development support (such as funds for conferences) (64%);
* Opportunities to communicate with department leadership (62%);
* Opportunities to participate in departmental governance (61%);
* Quality of the local school system (61%);
* Quality of other facilities (parking, offices, classrooms, etc.) (56%);
* Health care (56%);
* Your internal service assignments (56%);
* Rewards for research at the University (53%);
* An academically strong department (re: disciplinary peers) (53%);
* Adequate performance feedback (52%);
* Clarity of performance review processes (for promotion and tenure, and salary) (51%);
* Healthy social climate within the department (51%);
* Informal recognition by colleagues for good work (51%);
* Equity (ethnic, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, etc.) (51%);
* University services to support grants and contracts (51%); and
* Recreational opportunities (51%).

Although employees have been highly satisfied with employee benefits in previous studies, the level of satisfaction with employee benefits was the most highly rated item in the current study. Many retiring faculty expressed appreciation for the benefits and the help they received navigating the different benefit options. The number of faculty who expressed this appreciation and the faculty who contributed to this item’s high rating could be an indication that the implementation of the VRP went smoothly.

In general, the list of high satisfaction items is relatively consistent with that reported in previous studies. Items that made the high satisfaction list include health care, internal service assignments, quality of other facilities (parking, offices, classrooms, etc.), clarity of performance review processes (for promotion and tenure, and salary), informal recognition by colleagues for good work, healthy social climate within the department, equity (ethnic, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, etc.), and University services to support grants and contracts. Items that did not make the high satisfaction list in the current analysis include: formal recognition (such as University and college awards), quality of computing facilities, University services to support instructional development, and advising assignments.

Demonstrating this general satisfaction, the vast majority of retirees interviewed expressed their intention to maintain their relationship with the University. Approximately 81% of the 54 faculty who were asked whether or not they would like to maintain a connection to Penn State stated that they would like to do so. Some of them expressed a desire to continue conducting research at the University. Others wanted to be part of committees and to provide support services. Many of these faculty expected to have a working space, as well as continued access to their Penn State email address and the opportunity to use library facilities. Most of the faculty who stated that they will not maintain a connection to Penn State are moving out of the area. They acknowledged that this would make it difficult to maintain a connection, although some simply stated that they were ready to close the chapter on their academic career.

## Satisfaction at the University over Time

Faculty were provided open-response questions on the survey where they could share how faculty satisfaction has increased or decreased at Penn State, compared to 10 years ago. In terms of areas where faculty satisfaction has improved over time, many faculty members referred to support and services for research and grants. In terms of areas where satisfaction has declined over time, the most consistently cited issues included a heavy workload and the “pressure to work more, work harder, [and] work faster.” Many faculty who discussed the competitive environment stated that declining collegiality can be attributed to increased competition among faculty. Fourteen faculty in the interviews explicitly commented on this. In the survey, however, faculty were more split in their opinions on whether collegiality and college/department environment had improved over time. While some faculty commented on the declining sense of community within colleges and departments, others stated that personal and professional relationships at Penn State are stronger than a decade ago.

## Opinions on Fairness

Sixty-nine percent of survey respondents indicated that they felt they were treated fairly by the University, their college, and/or their department – an increase of nine percentage points compared to the previous study. Those who did not feel they were treated fairly commented on issues related to favoritism, limited opportunities for promotion, poor college leadership, a stressful work life/family balance, and administration’s lack of appreciation for the extra time and effort that faculty members contribute to students and the community.

The findings from the interviews regarding fairness were similar to the survey. For the respondents who explicitly commented on issues of fairness, nine respondents stated that they were treated fairly while five respondents stated that they were not treated fairly. Assistant professors who felt they were treated fairly stated that the workload was equitably distributed among their peers and senior faculty. Faculty who felt they were treated unfairly stated the opposite – they felt the workload was *not* evenly distributed between faculty members. These faculty also cited salary inequalities and an over-emphasis on faculty who secure research grants.

## Room for Improvement

Although satisfaction was positively skewed for almost every survey item, it is important to review the areas in which faculty showed the lowest levels of satisfaction. There were four areas in which at least one-third of faculty reported the lowest or second-lowest satisfaction rating: validity of Penn State’s faculty performance evaluation methods, salary increases that relate fairly to performance, spousal employment opportunities, and rewards for teaching at the University. However, it is important to note that even for these four items, a sizeable number of faculty (30% or more) reported the highest or second-highest satisfaction rating. For example, although salary increases that relate fairly to performance was the second lowest rated item in the survey (38% of faculty provided the lowest to second-lowest satisfaction level for this item), 43% of faculty reported the highest or second highest level of satisfaction with this item. This reinforces that – even among the lowest rated items – faculty satisfaction was reasonably high.

### Validity of Penn State’s faculty performance evaluation methods

Survey respondents were relatively divided in their satisfaction with the validity of Penn State’s faculty performance evaluation methods – 46% gave it the two lowest ratings and 39% gave it the two highest. Respondents were less polarized on this subject in the previous study (2013–2015), where the largest proportion of respondents (29%) rated this item at the mid-point and 28% indicated the lowest or next to lowest rating for their satisfaction in this area. In the interviews, many faculty commented negatively on performance evaluation methods, particularly in terms of the lack of clarity; these faculty cited unclear expectations for publishing and securing grants, as well as changing standards for promotion and tenure that were not clearly conveyed to them.

### Salary increases that relate fairly to performance

As in previous years, this item was one of the lowest rated areas for faculty. Thirty-eight percent of respondents indicated the lowest or next to lowest rating for their satisfaction in this area, up from 32% in the previous study. As described above, however, this is also an item where faculty opinions were split; a larger proportion of faculty gave it the highest or next-highest rating (43%) than the lowest or next to lowest rating (38%).

### Spousal employment opportunities

Spousal employment opportunities remain a consistently low-rated item among faculty, with 35% of faculty reporting the lowest or next to lowest rating for satisfaction in this area. This is a slight improvement from the previous study, where 32% of respondents gave it the lowest rating for satisfaction and four percent of respondents gave it the next to lowest rating. However, only three respondents in the interviews explicitly indicated that they left Penn State due to the lack of spousal employment opportunities in the Penn State area.

### Rewards for teaching at the University

A similar percent of respondents were dissatisfied with rewards for teaching at the University in the current study and the previous study (34% and 32%, respectively). Even though the level of dissatisfaction was similar in both studies, this was the 10th lowest rated item in the previous study, compared to the 4th lowest in the current study. This shake-up in rankings for items with similar levels of dissatisfaction indicates that faculty were dissatisfied with more items in the previous study. Eight respondents in the interviews explicitly discussed the higher emphasis placed on research and publication rather than teaching. One respondent stated that “someone who just does research” can move up the ladder but that there is “no path for people who teach to move up the ladder.”

## Faculty Work Environment

As discussed earlier, the research literature indicates that the faculty work environment can play a significant role in a faculty member’s decision to exit from the institution. We explore some aspects of this environment here.

### University Direction

Exiting faculty were asked in their interview whether they felt Penn State is moving in the right direction. The responses were split, with 15 affirmative responses and 14 negative ones. Respondents who felt Penn State was not moving in the right direction discussed concerns that Penn State is increasingly operated as a business that is growing to an “unsustainable bigness.” These respondents stated that University runs the risk of operating as a diploma mill that places too much focus on “cash cow” programs that displace some disciplines, such as the arts and humanities.

Many respondents who felt that the University is moving in the right direction stated that Penn State had become a more reputable and competitive research institution, with many also discussing how the reputation of specific programs improved over time.[[7]](#footnote-7) As one faculty member stated, Penn State is “becoming a world renowned Research University, and at heart still remaining a land grant institution dedicated to providing education to the children of the working class.” Faculty members also stated that infrastructure for online learning and library resources has improved.

### Level of Assignments

The responses to the three survey items related to teaching, advising, and service assignments were generally positive. The percentage of respondents indicating the highest or next-highest rating for satisfaction was 56% for internal service assignments, 71% for course teaching assignments and 49% for advising assignments. Compared to the previous study, respondents in the current study reported a similar level of satisfaction with course teaching assignments and advising assignments. Respondents were much more satisfied, however, with internal service assignments in the current study (in the previous study, only 39% reported the highest or next to highest satisfaction rating for this item).

Faculty concern with an increasing workload was more apparent in the interviews. Full and associate professors who made negative comments about tenure expectations cited an increasing workload. Some faculty stated that as Penn State’s student population has increased, there has not been commensurate growth in the number of faculty, thereby increasing individual faculty workload.

### Level of Support

Although faculty expressed concerns in the interviews and survey about the increasingly heavy workload and the pressure to “do it all,” faculty generally reported a high level of satisfaction with the level of support they receive. The four questions on the survey most closely related to level of support are:

* Professional development support (such as funds for conferences);
* University services to support instructional development;
* University services to support grants and contracts; and
* Adequate time for research.

Sixty-four percent of survey respondents indicated the highest or next highest rating for satisfaction with professional development support. Responses were more mixed for the other three support items, with close to 50% giving high satisfaction ratings for services to support instructional development, services to support grants and contracts, and adequate time for research. There have been significant gains in faculty satisfaction with professional development support and services to support grants and contracts, reinforcing the comments faculty made in the open-response sections of the survey. Compared to the previous study, the percentage of faculty who indicated the highest or next-highest rating for professional development support was 10 percentage points higher in the current study. The difference is even more pronounced for University services to support grants and contracts, where the percent of faculty who indicated the highest or next-highest rating in the current study was 10 percentage points higher compared to the previous study. Faculty in the interviews also noted that their research is supported by reducing teaching workloads.

### University Salary and Salary Increases

Forty-eight percent report the highest two satisfaction ratings for level of annual salary compared to 26% who reported the two lowest satisfaction ratings for this item. These satisfaction ratings are lower than the previous study, where 54% reported the highest two satisfaction ratings and 29% reported the two lowest satisfaction ratings. Faculty satisfaction with the fairness of salary increases relative to performance was more evenly distributed across the satisfaction scale. Forty-three percent gave this item the highest two ratings and 38% gave it the lowest two ratings. When asked what could have made them stay at Penn State in open-response items, four out of 16 faculty members who left for a more attractive position elsewhere stated that a higher salary would have helped. In the *Faculty Competition Report* (Penn State, 2017a), deans and chancellors reported that salary increases are a driving factor in faculty decisions to stay at Penn State or to depart for another institution.

In the interviews, some faculty cited higher pay in their decision to leave for a more attractive positions elsewhere. However, most of these faculty placed a stronger emphasis on seeking a better position within departments with stronger reputations at their new institution, and on better opportunities in general.

### Opinions on Tenure Expectations

The two items on the survey questionnaire most related to the issue of tenure expectations are validity of Penn State’s faculty performance evaluation methods and clarity of performance review processes (for promotion, tenure, and salary). Survey responses on these items were mixed, with 39% of respondents indicating a high degree of satisfaction with the validity of Penn State faculty performance evaluation methods and 46% indicating a low degree of satisfaction. Perceptions of the clarity of performance review processes were more positive, with 51% giving this a high rating and 30% giving this a low rating. For the open-response items, faculty comments regarding tenure expectations were generally negative, with faculty citing inconsistent requirements, timelines, and standards within departments and colleges.

Most of the faculty who commented on tenure expectations in the interviews expressed negative opinions on this topic, with only one faculty member explicitly expressing a positive opinion. The increasing workload due to research, teaching, and service obligations was the most frequently cited issue with tenure expectations. One faculty member stated that “so much gets undone or done poorly” due to the stress of balancing an overwhelming workload. The lack of clarity in tenure expectations was also cited by many faculty. Twenty-three faculty (nine full professors, five associate professors, seven assistant professors, and two faculty where rank aren’t provided) suggested the need to revisit the promotion and tenure process. The majority of faculty who commented specifically on this issue expressed a desire for clearer criteria and improved communication of these expectations to the faculty.

### Race and Ethnicity Issues

For the scaled survey items, the three items related to race and ethnicity in the survey are “Equity (ethnic, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, etc.)” in the individual considerations section and “Tolerance of ethnic and cultural diversity” and “A diverse population” in the local community life section. (See Appendices B and C for the list of sections and items.) Diversity in community life was one of the survey items that faculty members rated as highly important but that they were less satisfied with relative to other items on the survey. However, 46% of respondents provided the highest or second highest satisfaction rating for tolerance of ethnic and cultural diversity, compared to 20% of respondents who provided the lowest and second lowest ratings for this item.

More than 50% of respondents indicated that the highest or second-highest satisfaction level with “Equity (ethnic, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, etc).” Since there was such a small number of non-white faculty who completed the survey (four respondents), it is difficult to draw conclusions on whether or not faculty responses to this item vary by race/ethnicity; however, non-white respondents provided a slightly lower average satisfaction rating for this item than white respondents (3.25 compared to 3.57). In terms of a gender comparison, female faculty had a slightly lower average satisfaction rating than male faculty (3.35 compared to 3.61). However, there are additional limitations that make it challenging to draw inferences from this survey item. Due to the general wording of the question in this version of the survey, it is not possible to determine the type of equity respondents were referencing.[[8]](#footnote-8)

When departing faculty discussed issues pertaining to race/ethnicity in the open-response items, they tended to comment on inequity along racial/ethnic lines. Eight out of 61 faculty (13%) directly commented on these issues. When asked whether they experienced difficulty related to equity issues (e.g., discrimination or harassment), some respondents cited microaggressions, discriminatory practices, and a “culture that doesn’t support diverse individuals.” Six faculty in the interviews discussed the need to improve diversity in areas such as race/ethnicity, LGBTQ, and religion. These faculty discussed disparities in salary and the administrative makeup of female faculty and minority faculty. However, other faculty members expressed positive opinions on diversity. When asked in what ways faculty satisfaction has increased the most, compared to 10 years ago, these faculty stated that State College and the surrounding area has a “better and more diverse community” and that “Penn State has made an effort to show support for diversity.” Notably, many of these faculty were male and tended to discuss the improving standards of diversity in terms of the increasingly diverse population at Penn State.

As described earlier in the study, it is important to note that White faculty were the majority of survey respondents and that they are slightly overrepresented in the survey data. Consequently, the experiences of non-White faculty, and especially the views of Asian faculty, are not well-represented in the survey. The race of faculty was not disclosed in the interview process, so it is not possible to determine which perspectives belonged to those who are not the racial majority at Penn State.

### Gender Issues

As summarized in the brief literature review earlier, there is a considerable body of research on gender issues among faculty, but those findings are inconsistent. In general, there appear to be gender-related differences, but the similarities mostly outweigh the differences. Also, the literature suggests that overly simplistic interpretations can be misleading, especially because gender interacts with other factors (discipline, rank, age, and so forth) that affect faculty members’ experience and satisfaction in significant and substantive ways.

Historically Penn State exit data on female faculty has been limited, making it challenging to reach strong conclusions about gender-related similarities or differences. For example, in the previous study, there were only nine female interview respondents and five female survey respondents. By comparison, in the current study there were 34 female interview respondents and five female survey respondents, providing a much larger sample of female faculty than studies in the past.

An OPA analyst looked more closely at the average response ratings for each survey item to compare how male and female survey responses varied. The detailed data are not displayed but are available upon request.[[9]](#footnote-9) In terms of overall satisfaction scores, female and male survey respondents were equally as satisfied with University and college practices, departmental life, individual considerations, and support services and resources. Female survey respondents were less satisfied with local community life than their male colleagues; on a five-point scale, the average rating for females was 3.0 compared to 3.4 for males.

The difference between male and female levels of satisfaction was smaller than previous years. In the previous report for instance, there was an average difference of 0.4 or more (on a five-point scale) between male and female respondents for four areas: University and college practices, departmental life, individual considerations, and local community life. It is also important to note, however, that the small number of females in the previous study make it risky to draw comparisons or to reach strong conclusions about these differences. The narrowing of the gap between male and female ratings in the current analysis may suggest that satisfaction ratings balance out with a larger sample size. It is also possible that the sample of female faculty in the current study were more satisfied than female faculty in previous studies.

In the interviews, five female faculty explicitly discussed issues of sexism. One of the respondents commented on the “pervasive sexism in direct and indirect ways at both departmental and college levels,” stating that “male faculty were typically favored, publicly acknowledged, etc. and women faculty are (remain) invisible.” For female faculty who expressed dissatisfaction with gender issues, their general recommendation was to improve the working environment and to cultivate a climate that is more welcoming for female faculty. Some of these comments were echoed in the open-response items on the survey, where five faculty explicitly addressed their perceptions of gender discrimination at Penn State. These respondents referred to the lack of opportunities for women to advance in salary and rank, the higher number of female faculty being counseled out, and a general lack of sensitivity toward issues that female faculty contend with, such as single parenting.

If issues in racial/ethnic and gender diversity are to be explored in any meaningful way, it is critical that the University continue to encourage all exiting faculty – particularly non-White and female faculty – to participate in the exit interview and survey.

### Campus Differences

The OPA analyst also looked more closely at the average response ratings for each survey item to compare University Park to other Penn State campuses (data not displayed but available upon request). Satisfaction ratings at University Park and other Penn State campuses were very similar, with no average difference greater than 0.3 (on a five-point scale) between the two groups. It is interesting to note that the differences between University Park and other Penn State campuses, while already small, were even smaller than the previous study. Since averages are less volatile with a larger number of respondents, it is possible that the narrowing of the gap between campus groupings can also be attributed to the larger sample size.

In the interviews however, some faculty noted the existence of a “pecking order among campuses.” They stated that treatment varies by location, with University Park receiving more attention and resources. While faculty at University Park and the other Penn State campuses seemed to express a similar level of satisfaction with their Penn State experience, some also expressed the importance of improving communication across campuses. Some faculty at the Commonwealth campuses stated that this sense of isolation from University Park has increased over time, impeding collaboration across the University.

## What Matters Most: Faculty Ratings of Importance

Nearly every item on the survey was important to the faculty. Of the 45 items on the questionnaire, there were 39 items for which the most frequent response was the highest rating of importance. There were 20 items to which more than 75 percent of faculty gave the highest or second highest importance rating. Based on this measure, those items that seem to be of greatest importance to the faculty are:

* Professional development support (such as funds for conferences) (97%);
* Salary increases that relate fairly to performance (93%);
* Adequate time for research (93%);
* Professional autonomy (courses, research projects, service, etc.) (92%);
* Clarity of performance review processes (for promotion and tenure, and salary) (92%);
* Level of annual salary (90%);
* Health care (90%);
* An academically strong department (re: disciplinary peers) (89%);
* Balanced overall workload assignments in the department (89%);
* Employee benefits (87%);
* Validity of Penn State's faculty performance evaluation methods (85%);
* Course teaching assignments (84%);
* Opportunities to communicate with department leadership (82%);
* Healthy social climate within the department (82%);
* Tolerance of ethnic and cultural diversity (82%);
* The University's commitment to your field of study (82%);
* Quality of library facilities (80%);
* Rewards for research at the University (79%);
* Adequate performance feedback (79%); and
* Rewards for teaching at the University (79%).

Fourteen items that are on this list in the current study were also on the list in the previous study, indicating that most of these items are consistently important to faculty. Employee benefits and health care were the top ranked most important items in the previous study. Although they remained very important to faculty in the current study, employee benefits and health care benefits have dropped from the 1st and 2nd ranks, respectively, to 10th and 7th in the current study. The new additions to the current study’s list include: balanced overall workload assignments in the department, healthy social climate within the department, opportunities to communicate with department leadership, rewards for teaching at the University, tolerance of ethnic and cultural diversity, and validity of Penn State’s faculty performance evaluation methods.

### **Priority Matrix**

Figures 1A and 1B plot the mean rates of importance versus satisfaction and divides the plot into four quadrants along the five-point rating axis. Figure 1B zooms in on Figure 1A, dividing the plot along a four-point axis, providing a more granular view of the survey items. Item details can be found in Appendices B and C. On average, faculty rated both their satisfaction and the importance of each item above the midpoint of the rating scales (i.e., very satisfied and very important). To help determine which areas need the most attention, Figure 1B divides the plot into areas of relatively high importance/high satisfaction (top right), high importance/low satisfaction (bottom right), low importance/low satisfaction (bottom left), and low importance/high satisfaction (top left). Areas of high importance and high satisfaction should be monitored and maintained. Areas of high importance but low satisfaction should be prioritized for review and potential improvements. All item descriptions, with their item number, can be found in Appendix B. Items that were rated very high (greater than 4) in importance and relatively low (less than 4) in satisfaction were:

* 1c: Validity of Penn State’s faculty performance evaluation methods
* 1d: Clarity of performance review processes
* 1e: Rewards for research
* 1f: Rewards for teaching at the University
* 1h: The University’s commitment to your field of study
* 2b: Balanced overall workload assignments
* 2c: Mentoring of junior faculty
* 2d: An academically strong department
* 2f: Adequate performance feedback
* 2g: Opportunities to communicate with department leadership
* 2h: Healthy social climate within the department
* 2i: Informal recognition by colleagues for good work
* 3g: Salary increases that related fairly to performance
* 3h: Level of annual salary
* 3j: Equity
* 4a: Professional development support
* 4d: Adequate time for research
* 4g: Quality of computing facilities
* 4h: Quality of other facilities (parking, offices, classrooms, etc.)
* 5b: Availability of cultural events
* 5c: Quality of the local school system
* 5f: Health care
* 5g: A diverse population
* 5h: Tolerance of ethnic and cultural diversity





### **Employee Benefits and Health Care**

Benefits, particularly health care, have consistently been rated very high in importance by exiting faculty. In the current study, 87% of survey respondents gave benefits the highest or next to highest rating of importance and 90% of survey respondents gave health care the highest or next to highest rating of importance. The University appears to be performing well in employee benefits, as this item was rated highly for satisfaction, with 80% of respondents rating their satisfaction with employee benefits as the highest or next-highest rating. Although health care received the same proportion of high importance ratings as benefits, faculty are not nearly as satisfied in that area. Only 56% gave it the two highest satisfaction ratings. These trends for employee benefits and health care are similar to the previous survey, indicating that employee benefits and health care have been, and remain, important issues for faculty. In the context of the survey, health care is in the “Local Community Life” section. The intent of the question is focused on health care resources in the community, making it unclear if respondents are reporting on the quality of health care available in the area, or on the quality of the health care benefits provided by Penn State. Given that health care resources in the community are expanding, rather than contracting, it seems possible that the interpretation of the question may be related to concerns about health care benefits. The survey has been revised to provide greater clarity on this question for future analyses. Employee benefits and health care were either not raised or were discussed minimally in the interviews.

### **Professional Autonomy**

Not surprisingly, given faculty culture and consistent with prior findings, professional autonomy was one of the most important items rated by faculty, with 67% giving it the highest rating and 25% giving it the second highest rating. This finding is consistent with the previous student, as well as Daly and Dee’s (2006) finding that a lack of faculty autonomy is related to departure.

### Not Everything Matters Equally

Of the 45 items on the survey, there were three areas which more than one-third of faculty gave the two lowest ratings of importance: availability of child care (41%), opportunities to participate in University governance (41%), and flexibility to engage in consulting (48%). All three of these items, in addition to quality of laboratory facilities, received more low ratings of importance than high. Availability of child care and flexibility to engage in consulting have consistently ranked low in terms of importance in previous studies. Interestingly, there were significant changes in how faculty rated the importance of childcare in the current and previous studies. Compared to the previous study, a substantially *smaller* percent of retirees gave this item a low ranking and a substantially *larger* percent of non-retirees gave this item a low ranking in the current study. It appears that retiring faculty cared moreabout the availability of childcare in the current study than they did in the previous study. This may reflect the impact of campus-wide discussions on the availability and provision of University-supported daycare in recent years. It is also possible that the disproportionate number of retirees in the survey and interview data may skew the findings in other, less obvious ways.

Although shared governance was not ranked as highly important in the survey, the 14 faculty who discussed the issue of shared governance emphasized the importance of this issue. These faculty explicitly expressed the desire to improve faculty participation and concerns of an increasingly top-down approach to decision making. None of the interview respondents discussed the flexibility to engage in consulting.

# Conclusion

The responses to both the interviews and survey indicate that most faculty members leaving the University were generally satisfied with their Penn State experience. Faculty were most satisfied with employee benefits, professional autonomy, and quality of library facilities and were least satisfied with the validity of Penn State’s faculty performance evaluation methods and rewards for teaching at the University.[[10]](#footnote-10) This sentiment was echoed in both the interviews and the survey, where many faculty discussed the lack of clarity in tenure expectations, as well as the strong emphasis placed on research over teaching.

Many faculty expressed a positive view on the direction that Penn State is heading, stating that Penn State is becoming major research institution while maintaining the land grant mission at its core. However, the increasing emphasis on research has also elicited criticism from faculty. Some respondents expressed that the research mission may be impeding the teaching mission and that there is a greater emphasis on research in promotion and tenure decisions. Some faculty also identified the drive for excellence as a cause of increasing workload: “Competitiveness and expectations have increased considerably—while good for Penn State’s reputation, [I’m] not so sure it’s good for long-term health and well-being of faculty.” In the open-response survey items, faculty provided positive feedback on grant and research support services. Similar to the interviews, however, they provided negative feedback in areas such as the stress of a heavy workload and the “pressure to do it all.” Some faculty also expressed concern about the management style at the University becoming more businesslike. These faculty stated that this has increased competition and adversely affected the sense of collegiality at Penn State.

The positive view of grant and research support may reflect the addition of University support services in response to increased pressures for faculty in areas such as securing research grants. Daly and Dee (2006) found a negative correlation between intent to stay and feelings of a heavy workload, and Rosser (2004) concluded that technical support, administrative support, and support for professional development were important for faculty retention. Therefore, the University should determine whether faculty are more overwhelmed with responsibilities today than in the past, and evaluate whether mechanisms to support faculty are effective.

Some faculty discussed racial/ethnic and gender discrimination, but there were also many who had positive comments about diversity efforts at Penn State. Female faculty who discussed sexism emphasized the need to improve the working environment for women. However, there were an equal number of faculty who expressed positive statements about gender, and diversity overall, at Penn State. These faculty emphasized the growth in the overall proportion of staff and students who are female or who belong to an underrepresented group. In terms of discussing and addressing discrimination, the University should continue to particularly encourage female and minority faculty to participate in the exit process so that their experiences are represented in survey and interview data.

In the survey, faculty rated almost all of the items as highly important. However, the items that faculty rated as high-important, lower-satisfaction should be examined and monitored by the University to see where potential improvements can be made. Among some of the issues that are of greatest importance to the faculty, the University generally appears to be faring well. One exception, faculty satisfaction with health care—one of the items of greatest importance to the University faculty—has been consistently ranked as high-importance, lower-satisfaction in multiple study years, and should be further explored given its importance to faculty. Other high-importance, lower-satisfaction items include included validity of Penn State’s faculty performance evaluation methods, rewards for teaching at the University, rewards for outreach at the University, a diverse population, and spousal employment opportunities. In the interviews, many faculty expressed the need to have clear performance criteria on research, teaching, and service expectations. Shared governance, while not rated as important in the survey, was explicitly cited as important and needing improvement by many faculty in the interviews.

The under-representation of faculty members who are leaving for reasons other than retirement is also cause for concern. The University invests heavily in recruiting and retaining faculty, and while some attrition is to be expected, the loss of productive faculty members prior to retirement should be identified and monitored (Penn State, 2017a).

Overall, most faculty were satisfied and found it rewarding to have worked at Penn State. These faculty expressed a desire to maintain their connection to the University, whether accessing library facilities, contributing to research, or participating in committees.

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# Appendix A: Faculty Exit Interview Officers 2013/14 – 2014/15

**Abington**
Ross Brinkert
David Ruth

**Agricultural Sciences**Dennis Decoteau
Eileen Fabian (Alternate)

**Altoona**
Harold Hayford

**Arts and Architecture**
Marica Tacconi

**Beaver**
Keith Wilson

**Berks**Malika Richards

**Brandywine**
John Tierney

**Business**
Orie Barron

**Communications**Marcia DiStaso

**Dickinson School of Law**
Nancy Welsh

**DuBois**Jacquelyn Atkins

**Earth and Mineral Sciences**
Michael A. Arthur

**Education**Pamela S. Wolfe

**Engineering**Lynn A. Carpenter

**Erie, The Behrend College**
Kathleen Noce

**Fayette, The Eberly Campus**
JoAnn Jankoski

**Great Valley**John C. Cameron

**Greater Allegheny**John Peles

**Harrisburg**Linda Null
Girish Subramanian

**Hazleton**Michael Polgar

**Health and Human Development**
Linda Wray

**Hershey Medical Center/Medicine**
Laura Carrell

**Information Sciences and Technology**
Marc Friedenberg

**Lehigh Valley**Margaret Christian

**Liberal Arts**Dennis Gouran
John H. Riew

**Minority Faculty**
Keith Gilyard

**Mont Alto**Kevin Boon

**New Kensington**Jyotsna “Josi” Kalavar

**Nursing**Kathleen Mastrian

**Penn State Law**Samuel Thompson, Jr.

**Schuylkill**Rod M. Heisey

**Science**
Julian Maynard

**Shenango**
Angela Gianoglio Pettitt

**University Libraries**Barbara Coopey
Vernon Schlotzhauer

**Wilkes-Barre**Christyne Berzsenyi

**Worthington Scranton**
Paul J. Perrone, Sr.

**York**Kenneth Swalgin

For a current list of Exit Interview Officers, visit <https://www.vpfa.psu.edu/exit-interview-officers/>.

# Appendix B: Distribution of ratings for satisfaction

Table B-1: Satisfaction with University and college practices.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Low |  |  |  | High | No response |
| Opportunities to participate in University governance. | 3% | 7% | 44% | 26% | 18% | 2% |
| Opportunities to participate in college governance. | 5% | 8% | 34% | 21% | 28% | 3% |
| Validity of Penn State's faculty performance evaluation methods. | 23% | 23% | 15% | 23% | 16% | 0% |
| Clarity of performance review processes (for P&T, salary). | 16% | 13% | 18% | 25% | 26% | 2% |
| Rewards for research at the University. | 12% | 8% | 25% | 23% | 30% | 3% |
| Rewards for teaching at the University. | 18% | 16% | 33% | 18% | 12% | 3% |
| Rewards for outreach at the University. | 18% | 10% | 43% | 20% | 5% | 5% |
| The University's commitment to your field of study. | 21% | 10% | 25% | 25% | 18% | 2% |
| Formal recognition (such as University and college awards). | 8% | 2% | 43% | 25% | 21% | 2% |

Table B-2: Satisfaction with departmental life.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Low |  |  |  | High | No response |
| Opportunities to participate in departmental governance. | 7% | 2% | 30% | 25% | 36% | 2% |
| Balanced overall workload assignments in the department. | 10% | 16% | 31% | 25% | 18% | 0% |
| Mentoring of junior faculty. | 12% | 10% | 31% | 26% | 20% | 2% |
| An academically strong department (re: disciplinary peers). | 8% | 8% | 30% | 16% | 36% | 2% |
| Sufficient support for high quality graduate students. | 23% | 3% | 21% | 18% | 25% | 8% |
| Adequate performance feedback. | 7% | 10% | 28% | 31% | 21% | 3% |
| Opportunities to communicate with department leadership. | 7% | 7% | 20% | 18% | 44% | 5% |
| Healthy social climate within the department. | 13% | 13% | 20% | 21% | 30% | 3% |
| Informal recognition by colleagues for good work. | 8% | 12% | 28% | 25% | 26% | 2% |

Table B-3: Satisfaction with individual considerations.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Low |  |  |  | High | No response |
| Your course teaching assignments. | 2% | 7% | 21% | 26% | 44% | 0% |
| Your advising assignments. | 5% | 3% | 38% | 23% | 26% | 3% |
| Your internal service assignments. | 3% | 8% | 30% | 26% | 30% | 3% |
| Professional autonomy (courses, research projects, service…). | 2% | 8% | 10% | 26% | 53% | 2% |
| Internal money to initiate research activities. | 15% | 15% | 28% | 15% | 25% | 3% |
| Flexibility to engage in consulting. | 5% | 8% | 36% | 23% | 21% | 7% |
| Salary increases that relate fairly to performance. | 18% | 20% | 18% | 20% | 23% | 2% |
| Level of annual salary. | 15% | 12% | 25% | 28% | 20% | 2% |
| Employee benefits. | 0% | 5% | 13% | 39% | 41% | 2% |
| Equity (ethnic, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation…) | 12% | 7% | 28% | 25% | 26% | 3% |

Table B-4: Satisfaction with support services and resources.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Low |  |  |  | High | No response |
| Professional development support (such as funds for conferences) | 5% | 7% | 25% | 39% | 25% | 0% |
| University services to support instructional development. | 3% | 8% | 38% | 25% | 25% | 2% |
| University services to support grants and contracts. | 8% | 10% | 26% | 38% | 13% | 5% |
| Adequate time for research. | 5% | 18% | 23% | 25% | 25% | 5% |
| Quality of library facilities. | 0% | 3% | 18% | 28% | 49% | 2% |
| Quality of laboratory facilities. | 8% | 5% | 38% | 18% | 15% | 15% |
| Quality of computing facilities. | 2% | 3% | 43% | 25% | 23% | 3% |
| Quality of other facilities (parking, offices, classrooms…). | 3% | 13% | 28% | 33% | 23% | 0% |

Table B-5: Satisfaction with local community life.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Low |  |  |  | High | No response |
| Social opportunities in the local community. | 12% | 18% | 31% | 21% | 13% | 5% |
| Availability of cultural events. | 10% | 18% | 26% | 26% | 15% | 5% |
| Quality of the local school system. | 10% | 3% | 16% | 23% | 38% | 10% |
| Recreational opportunities. | 10% | 12% | 25% | 33% | 18% | 3% |
| Availability of child care. | 7% | 8% | 44% | 8% | 16% | 16% |
| Health care. | 7% | 15% | 21% | 23% | 33% | 2% |
| A diverse population. | 10% | 21% | 38% | 21% | 5% | 5% |
| Tolerance of ethnic and cultural diversity. | 5% | 15% | 30% | 38% | 8% | 5% |
| Spousal employment opportunities. | 20% | 15% | 23% | 8% | 21% | 13% |

# Appendix C: Distribution of ratings for importance

Table C-1: Importance of University and college practices.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Low |  |  |  | High | No response |
| Opportunities to participate in University governance. | 21% | 20% | 28% | 12% | 18% | 2% |
| Opportunities to participate in college governance. | 18% | 16% | 18% | 20% | 26% | 2% |
| Validity of Penn State's faculty performance evaluation methods. | 0% | 5% | 10% | 23% | 62% | 0% |
| Clarity of performance review processes (for P&T, salary). | 0% | 3% | 3% | 31% | 61% | 2% |
| Rewards for research at the University. | 3% | 2% | 13% | 25% | 54% | 3% |
| Rewards for teaching at the University. | 0% | 5% | 13% | 34% | 44% | 3% |
| Rewards for outreach at the University. | 13% | 7% | 23% | 30% | 23% | 5% |
| The University's commitment to your field of study. | 3% | 3% | 10% | 26% | 56% | 2% |
| Formal recognition (such as University and college awards). | 10% | 10% | 33% | 16% | 30% | 2% |

Table C-2: Importance of departmental life.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Low |  |  |  | High | No response |
| Opportunities to participate in departmental governance. | 7% | 5% | 23% | 23% | 43% | 0% |
| Balanced overall workload assignments in the department. | 0% | 3% | 8% | 31% | 57% | 0% |
| Mentoring of junior faculty. | 8% | 5% | 10% | 16% | 59% | 2% |
| An academically strong department (re: disciplinary peers). | 3% | 0% | 7% | 20% | 69% | 2% |
| Sufficient support for high quality graduate students. | 18% | 3% | 10% | 12% | 48% | 8% |
| Adequate performance feedback. | 5% | 3% | 10% | 26% | 53% | 3% |
| Opportunities to communicate with department leadership. | 2% | 2% | 10% | 20% | 62% | 5% |
| Healthy social climate within the department. | 2% | 3% | 10% | 25% | 57% | 3% |
| Informal recognition by colleagues for good work. | 3% | 5% | 13% | 26% | 49% | 3% |

Table C-3: Importance of individual considerations.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Low |  |  |  | High | No response |
| Your course teaching assignments. | 0% | 3% | 13% | 16% | 67% | 0% |
| Your advising assignments. | 8% | 8% | 33% | 16% | 30% | 3% |
| Your internal service assignments. | 0% | 10% | 26% | 23% | 38% | 3% |
| Professional autonomy (courses, research projects, service…). | 0% | 0% | 5% | 25% | 67% | 3% |
| Internal money to initiate research activities. | 7% | 3% | 20% | 26% | 41% | 3% |
| Flexibility to engage in consulting. | 25% | 23% | 20% | 16% | 12% | 5% |
| Salary increases that relate fairly to performance. | 3% | 0% | 3% | 26% | 67% | 0% |
| Level of annual salary. | 2% | 0% | 7% | 30% | 61% | 2% |
| Employee benefits. | 0% | 0% | 10% | 21% | 66% | 3% |
| Equity (ethnic, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation…) | 5% | 3% | 15% | 18% | 57% | 2% |

Table C-4: Support Services and Resources.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Low |  |  |  | High | No response |
| Professional development support (such as funds for conferences) | 0% | 2% | 2% | 34% | 62% | 0% |
| University services to support instructional development. | 8% | 10% | 25% | 28% | 30% | 0% |
| University services to support grants and contracts. | 5% | 2% | 23% | 25% | 41% | 5% |
| Adequate time for research. | 0% | 2% | 0% | 26% | 67% | 5% |
| Quality of library facilities. | 0% | 3% | 16% | 21% | 59% | 0% |
| Quality of laboratory facilities. | 25% | 8% | 21% | 7% | 25% | 13% |
| Quality of computing facilities. | 0% | 3% | 23% | 23% | 44% | 5% |
| Quality of other facilities (parking, offices, classrooms…). | 0% | 5% | 18% | 33% | 43% | 2% |

Table C-5: Importance of local community life.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Low |  |  |  | High | No response |
| Social opportunities in the local community. | 7% | 15% | 15% | 30% | 30% | 5% |
| Availability of cultural events. | 2% | 5% | 16% | 34% | 36% | 7% |
| Quality of the local school system. | 12% | 2% | 7% | 25% | 49% | 7% |
| Recreational opportunities. | 5% | 3% | 16% | 36% | 34% | 5% |
| Availability of child care. | 31% | 10% | 10% | 13% | 21% | 15% |
| Health care. | 0% | 2% | 8% | 18% | 72% | 0% |
| A diverse population. | 3% | 2% | 18% | 26% | 48% | 3% |
| Tolerance of ethnic and cultural diversity. | 3% | 2% | 10% | 23% | 59% | 3% |
| Spousal employment opportunities. | 15% | 5% | 5% | 13% | 51% | 12% |

1. Prior to summer 2017, this position was the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. In the context of this report, the term “dean” includes the Vice President for Commonwealth Campuses who provides academic leadership on curricular matters and promotion and tenure for the 14 campuses that do not have college status, and “chancellor” for the five campus colleges (Abington, Altoona, Behrend, Berks, and Harrisburg). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The previous study summarized interview and survey data for fiscal years 2013/14 and 2014/15. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Gender was not reported in all surveys and interview notes. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Race/ethnicity data were only reported in the survey. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Exit Interview Officers are encouraged to ask all faculty about their satisfaction throughout their career at Penn State, except for those who are leaving due to tenure denial or being counseled out. The counts listed here are referencing only faculty who provided a direct and explicit response to this question, most of whom were retiring faculty. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. It is difficult to generalize this finding since only a subset of faculty commented on improving standards and reputations for their programs. However, among the faculty who commented on how program quality has changed over time, most stated that the quality of their program has *improved* over time, as opposed to *declining* over time. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. In the updated version of the survey that went into effect for fiscal year 2018-19, faculty members who indicate that they have experienced inequity are prompted to elaborate on this question. They are asked to what extent they experience inequity in the following areas: sexual harassment, gender discrimination, discrimination based on sexual orientation, racial/ethnic discrimination, ageism, discrimination based on religion, discrimination based on political beliefs, and other type(s) of discrimination. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Please direct requests to the Office of Planning and Assessment (opa@psu.edu). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. It is important to note, however, that in the context of the survey the level of “dissatisfaction” is relative. Even among the lowest rated faculty items, a sizeable proportion of faculty reported the highest or second-highest satisfaction rating, and Figure 1A demonstrates that satisfaction was positively skewed for almost every survey item. There were no significant differences in the scaled survey items by gender or campus. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)